Prominent Canadians to guide much-needed changes to stroke prevention, care and treatment

A group of prominent Canadians, led by Kenneth Fyke, who headed Saskatchewan’s 2001 Commission on Medicare, will oversee a major national effort to change the way stroke is managed in this country.

Fyke has been appointed Chair of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Stroke Strategy (CSS), a joint initiative of the Canadian Stroke Network and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. The goal of the Canadian Stroke Strategy is to help support an integrated approach to stroke prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in every province and territory by 2010.

“The Canadian Stroke Strategy gives us an opportunity to make a real impact on the health of Canadians by improving the quality of health-care systems in Canada,” Fyke says. “It will serve as a model initiative, using leading science to help create meaningful policy and practice change.”

The Steering Committee is composed of respected national experts from across the country with a strong interest in fighting stroke, one of Canada’s leading causes of disability and death.

“Approximately 50,000 Canadians have a stroke each year, and about 300,000 are living with its effects,” says Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. “We can and must do a better job of preventing strokes, treating them effectively, and reintegrating people back into their communities. The Canadian Stroke Strategy will help ensure that happens, across the country.”

The Canadian Stroke Strategy provides support for provincial and territorial efforts to implement best practices in stroke prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and community reintegration. National platforms will be developed to support public awareness building, guidelines and standards of care, training of health professionals coordinated research and ongoing monitoring.

While new research, treatments and clinical practices developed in the last 10 years offer hope to stroke patients, best practices are not being consistently applied, leaving a significant gap between what should be done and what is being done about stroke in Canada’s health-care system.

“The Canadian Stroke Strategy will help bridge the gap between the latest stroke research and the current practice in most parts of the country,” says Dr. Antoine Hakim, CEO and Scientific Director of the Canadian Stroke Network. “It creates an opportunity to improve the lives of thousands of Canadians and to save millions of health-care dollars.”

Steering Committee members are Pierre Boyle, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Montreal; Sandra Black, Head of Neurology at Sunnybrook and Women’s Health Sciences Centre; Brenda Flaherty, Executive Vice-President of Clinical Operations at Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation; Patricia Gallagher, a Neuroscience Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Saint John, New Brunswick, Regional Hospital; Frances Gregor, a nurse and faculty member of Dalhousie University in Halifax; Edmund Harrison, member of the Department of Physical Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, PEI; Janusz Kaczorowski, Associate Professor & Research Director in the Department of Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University; Robert Liley, a Vancouver-based healthcare consultant and Vice-President of the Stroke Recovery Association of B.C.; Jim O’Brien, a management consultant with experience in diabetes and chronic disease, Robert Teasell, Chair-Chief of the Department of Physical Medicine, St. Joseph’s Health Care London; and Tim Watson, Assistant Clinical Professor of the Calgary Stroke Program in the Department of Neurosciences at the University of Calgary. Ex-Officio members are Alison McDonald, Co-Chair, Best Practices, Phil Teal, Co-Chair, Professional Development and Training, and Michael Hill, Chair, Information and Evaluation Working Group.

Biographies for CSS Steering Committee members are as follows.

Kenneth J. Fyke
Ken Fyke has over 40 years of experience in Canadian health services. He is the author of “Caring for Medicare—Sustaining a Quality System”, the 2001 Report of the Commission on Medicare in the province of Saskatchewan. Ken served as a member of the BC Royal Commission on Health Care Costs. He was the founding Chair of the Board of Directors of Canadian Blood Services (CBS), and has served as Deputy Minister of Health in the provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Ken was the first President and CEO of the Greater Victoria Hospital Society, and also CEO of the Capital Health Region in Victoria, where he developed an integrated regional health service. He has led health services restructuring, nationally and international-ly, and has testified before Standing Committees of the House of Commons and the Canadian Senate on reform of the Canadian health system. He continues to

Kenneth Fyke will lead the CSS Steering Committee
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provide consulting services in the areas of public policy and operational issues in the health field. Mr. Fyke has received numerous degrees and honours. He has served on numerous boards, frequently contributes to education events and has written, spoken and consulted widely on health policy, management and government issues.

**Pierre Boyle** (Canadian Stroke Network Board Appointee)

Pierre Boyle is the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Medicine, at the Université de Montréal. Dr. Boyle has accrued several years of experience in research development in academic hospitals, university settings, as well as in provincial and national agencies. He has served on the boards of many organizations. Dr. Boyle was the founding executive director of CANVAC, the Canadian Network of Centres of Excellence in Vaccines and Immunotherapeutics. He was Executive Director and CEO of FRSQ (Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec) for several years where he was notably successful in developing several major partnerships in health research. He holds a master’s degree in health administration from the University of Ottawa and a PhD in clinical epidemiology from McGill University. Over the past thirty years, he has combined academic positions at McGill and Université de Montréal with management positions in the health system, including at the Quebec Ministry of Health and at the Quebec Hospital Association, where he was actively involved in developing clinical practice monitoring tools and knowledge transfer activities with clinicians.

**Sandra Black**

Dr. Sandra Black is the Head of Neurology at Sunnybrook and Women’s College Health Sciences Centre and Medical Director of the Regional Stroke Centre for North and East Toronto. She is a founding member of the Canadian Stroke Consortium and one of the physician architects of the Ontario Stroke Strategy. Dr. Black assisted with the planning and implementation of the Telesstroke Program linking Toronto to Northern Ontario. She is also a Site Director of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Centre for Stroke Recovery. Dr. Black has held several executive positions with many international and national stroke and neurology associations. She is highly published for her research on vascular cognitive impairment and stroke recovery.

**Brenda Flaherty**

Brenda Flaherty is Executive Vice-President, Clinical Operations, Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) Corporation. She is also an Assistant Professor of Nursing at McMaster University, Faculty of Health Sciences. She has been the Chair of the Central South/Central West Region—Regional Stroke Steering Committee since 1998. HHS was a demonstration site in the HSF Ontario Coordinated Stroke Strategy. During this phase, HHS collaborated with regional and provincial partners across the continuum to develop a common vision for stroke care and an infrastructure to support change. Ms. Flaherty has a great deal of experience in leadership roles, and has sat on the board of several health-related organizations.

**Patricia Gallagher**

Pat Gallagher is a Neurosciences Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Saint John Regional Hospital. During her career she has held several positions at Saint John Regional Hospital, as well as being an instructor for the University of New Brunswick. Ms. Gallagher has organized, chaired and been part of several provincial and national committees and associations and is the recipient of several national nursing awards. Ms. Gallagher is currently a Board member of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick, and a member of the New Brunswick Integrated Stroke Strategy Advisory Committee. She is also a member of the Rehabilitation Standards Committee of the Department of Health and Wellness.

**Fran Gregor** (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada Board Appointee)

Dr. Frances Gregor is a nurse, and a faculty member of Dalhousie University. She has served as President of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia (1984-1988), and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (1993-1995). At the national level she has led a number of committees tasked with the responsibility for charting a new course for the Foundation in several areas. From 1997-99 she chaired the Issues and Options Working Group whose responsibility it was to recommend a new approach to the research function within HSFC. In 2002, she was asked to chair the Emergency Cardiac Care Ad Hoc Review Committee, which brought forward a new model for this important Foundation role. In 2000, Dr. Gregor co-chaired the first Canadian Cardiovascular Congress, a joint HSFC/CCS venture to bring together under one roof the ‘cardiovascular family’ in Canada. She is a recipient of the HSFC Distinguished Service Award, and a Life-Member of the NSHSF Board of Directors.

**Ed Harrison**

Dr. Edmund Harrison is a member of the Department of Physical Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, PEI. Prior to relocating to PEI in July of 2004, he was Director of the Stroke and Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program in Halifax. He is also an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University. Dr. Harrison has a career history of developing stroke care systems. He was Chair of the Nova Scotia Integrated Stroke Strategy Committee from 2000 to 2004. Currently Dr. Harrison is a member of the Integrated Stroke Advisory Committee of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of PEI, and Chair of their Evaluation and Monitoring Task Group. As a physiatrist, Dr. Harrison brings to the table expertise related to stroke patient rehabilitation and community re-integration.

**Janusz Kaczorowski**

Dr. Janusz Kaczorowski is an Associate Professor & Research Director in the Department of Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University. He has diverse research experience spanning family health, health promotion and disease prevention, knowledge translation and delivery of integrated health care. Dr. Kaczorowski has held leadership roles with several research committees, groups, boards and associations. He was instrumental in the
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success of the CHAP (Community Hypertension Awareness Program) Program held in the communities of Brockville and Grimsby, with his focus being on prevention.

Robert Liley

Robert Liley is a Management Consultant who has provided consulting services to senior management of both public and private organizations across North America. He has a strong business and financial background. Mr. Liley is currently Vice-President of the Stroke Recovery Association of BC, a not-for-profit organization that works with stroke patients across BC to assist them in maintaining their overall quality of life and to remain living independently in their communities. During his career he has undertaken several strategic business improvement initiatives for organizations such as SC Johnson and Sons, Workers' Compensation Board of BC, and Pacific Blue Cross. Mr. Liley has just completed the development of a business model and Business Case for a new Occupational Disease Control Business Unit to be embedded within the BC Centre for Disease Control.

Jim O’Brien

Jim O’Brien is a senior executive with extensive leadership experience in the health charity sector. He was Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Diabetes Association from 1990-2002. In this role Mr. O’Brien led the organization through a challenging and important change process. Working with the National Board of Directors, Mr. O’Brien and his team overhauled the organization’s governance structure, moving from a multi-layered, federation-style structure to a unified national organization. The revitalized board was streamlined from 28 to 11 members, and prioritized its efforts to focus on strategic rather than operational initiatives. (The Canadian Diabetes Association was later recognized for this innovative governance reform receiving The Conference Board of Canada/Spencer Stuart 2005 National Awards in Governance in the not-for-profit category). Mr. O’Brien brings with him extensive experience in communications, finances and organization. He has held the positions of Director or Chair for several associations.

Robert Teasell

Dr. Robert Teasell is Chair-Chief of the Department of Physical Medicine, St. Joseph’s Health Care London and Professor in the Schulich School of Medicine, University of Western Ontario. He has extensive experience in leadership roles, strategic planning and implementation of programs. He’s held leadership positions with an array of organizations, both academic and administrative. Dr. Teasell has assisted with planning, and been a speaker at numerous stroke conferences/conventions and meetings around the world. He has developed a 2000+ stroke rehabilitation patient database, has conducted clinical trials in stroke rehabilitation and specializes in systematic reviews of treatment, which in turn have formed the basis for the development of national consensus projects in stroke rehabilitation focusing on knowledge integration.

Tim Watson

Dr. Tim Watson is an Assistant Clinical Professor of the Calgary Stroke Program in the Department of Neurosciences at the University of Calgary, and also a consultant neurologist to the Calgary Health Region. He has been a key leader in the Alberta Provincial Stroke Strategy, where he has contributed substantially to the development, organization and implementation levels. He is dedicated to improving stroke care throughout Alberta and has been successful as a champion for the strategy because of his collaborative and consensus building approach. Despite his considerable time commitment to his practice, Dr. Watson has made numerous trips to rural Alberta to help his colleagues improve their own stroke care practices.

Ex-Officio Members:

Alison McDonald, Co-Chair, Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines Working Group. Alison McDonald is a Physiotherapist at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Alison has been an Instructor at the Dalhousie University School of Physiotherapy, as well as supervised students through their clinical practicum. She has won several Awards, including in 2003 the Dalhousie University School of Physiotherapy Clinical Education Award. Alison was Chair of the Stroke Rehabilitation and Community Re-Integration Task Group of the Nova Scotia Integrated Stroke Strategy (NSISS) Committee, and continues to be involved provincially with the Integrated Stroke Advisory Committee of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia. Alison is involved in research, and is recognized as an expert in stroke rehabilitation provincially.

Michael Hill. Chair, Information and Evaluation Working Group. Dr. Michael Hill is Director of the Stroke Unit and a member of the renowned stroke team at the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine, which is striving to develop clinical tools that will help physicians diagnose and manage stroke with clot-busting drugs. He was the recipient of the 2001 Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC) Henry J.M. Barnett research scholarship and the 2004 American Academy of Neurology Michael S. Pessin Stroke Leadership Award. Dr. Hill’s research and numerous publications have afforded cerebrovascular research with valuable data that includes diagnosis, therapy and prognostication in thrombolytic therapy in patients with acute ischemic stroke.

Phil Teal, Co-Chair, Professional Development and Training Working Group. Dr. Philip Teal has been Director of the Stroke Prevention Clinic at Vancouver General Hospital and Health Sciences Centre since 1992. He is
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also an Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of British Columbia. He is currently Chair of the Board of the Canadian Stroke Consortium. Dr. Teal is also currently involved in the FASTER (Fast Assessment of Stroke and Transient Ischemic Attack to Prevent Early Occurrence) Project of the Canadian Stroke Network.

Sally Brown

Sally Brown has been CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada since October 2001. Prior to this appointment, she was Vice-President, External Relations and then Senior Vice-President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). From 1989 to 1991 Ms. Brown was a special advisor in the Prime Minister’s Office. Ms. Brown also served as hospital administrator at the Toronto General Hospital from 1984-87, becoming Assistant Vice-President, Diagnostic Services in 1987. She holds a Diploma in Nursing from the Toronto General Hospital School of Nursing, and a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Health Sciences (Health Administration) from the University of Toronto. Ms. Brown has served on a number of community agency boards and is currently a trustee of the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and board member of the Canadian Stroke Network.

Antoine Hakim

Dr. Antoine Hakim, currently holds the titles of Professor & University Chair, Neurology, University of Ottawa; Director, Neuroscience Research, Ottawa Health Research Institute; CEO & Scientific Director, Canadian Stroke Network; and, Senior Director, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Centre for Stroke Recovery. He has experience in the private, academic and hospital sectors, and has chaired and served as a member of many committees and boards of granting agencies, foundations, hospitals and professional associations. In addition to teaching, research, and administrative duties, he maintains clinical duties at the Ottawa Hospital, General Campus. As CEO & Scientific Director of the CSN, Dr. Hakim is committed to bringing together Canada’s stakeholders in stroke, helping them gain access to the resources they need to excel, and building a national network that supports collaborative research. He has received many honours during his career, including the Jonathan Ballon Award in 1985, Researcher of the Year in Ottawa Award in 1995, Award of Excellence by the Canadian Stroke Consortium in 2000, and the Ottawa Life Sciences Council Career Achievement Award in 2004.

Debra Lynkowski

Debra Lynkowski is the Director of the Canadian Stroke Strategy. She has 18 years experience in the non-profit and public sectors, primarily health-related. Debra holds a law degree from the University of Alberta. She has diverse experience including work in health policy, advocacy, community relations, volunteer development, and fund development. Debra worked with the Canadian Diabetes Association for ten years, first as the Executive Director of the Alberta/NWT Division and later as the National Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, during which time she established a national public policy and advocacy office for the association in Ottawa. Prior to joining the Canadian Stroke Strategy, Debra worked as a senior policy advisor at Health Canada (now the Public Health Agency of Canada).

Laurie Cameron

Laurie Cameron is the Program Coordinator & Executive Assistant for the Canadian Stroke Strategy. She brings extensive experience in the health care sector (acute, LTC and pediatrics) and government. She was E.A. to the Specialized Pediatric Coordinating Council, an advisory committee to the Ontario Ministry of Health, as well as to the Regional Director for Eastern Ontario, Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care. Prior to that, she was employed by the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre where she supported the CEO and Board of Directors.

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